

Equine Investigations Overview

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Reasons We Get Called

Nature of the call

- Poor Body Condition
- Overgrown hooves
- Open wounds
- Lack of Water Supply
- No shelter
- No hay
- Neighbor doesn't like neighbor
- Someone saw something on social media
- Injured animal
- Someone doesn't like a training method
- Abusive training
- Overworking horses



How many calls turn into cases?

- 80% of calls are unfounded or can be resolved thru education working with owners.
- Goal of every call is to resolve the issue.



Now We Investigate and Educate

Skills and Qualities Necessary to Be An Effective Investigator

- Communication and Interview Skills. Interviews are often the cornerstone of any investigation.
- Control Emotions
- Honesty and Ethics
- Technical Skills
- Knowledge of the Law
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Research Skills
- Writing





2 Primary Categories of Animal Cruelty: Abuse and Neglect

- Abuse: involves the intentional harming of an animal through actions such as mutilating.
- Neglect: a failure to provide adequate care, including access to food and water and veterinary care when needed.

The Equine Investigator-What we need to know

- Equine Psychology (Understanding Behavior)
- Identification
- Anatomy
- Veterinary Care
- Property Inspections
- Catching and Handling
- Vital Signs
- Equine Sports Abuse and Abusive Tack



The Equine Investigator- What we need to know

- Dealing with Questionable Professionals
- Horse Auctions
- Horse Hoarders
- Body Condition Scoring
- First Aid
- Nutrition
- Search and Seizure
- Interview and Behavioral Analysis
- Foot and Leg Care

Foot and Leg Care

- Evaluate hoof care for horses
- Knowledgeably describe hoof conditions
- Talk to owners and caretakers about equine hoof care

Dealing with Questionable Professionals

When training is abusive:

- When it causes pain that lasts longer than 2 seconds
- When it causes mental confusion in the horse
- When it causes psychological damage to the horse
- When it causes physical damage to the horse



Body Condition Scoring

- Invented at Texas A & M and Tarlton State by Dr. Don Hennecke & Associates to determine nutritional status of broodmares.
- This scoring system is a numerical scale used to evaluate the amount of fat on a horse's body. The goal was to create a universal scale to assess horses' bodyweight.

How does horses loose weight?

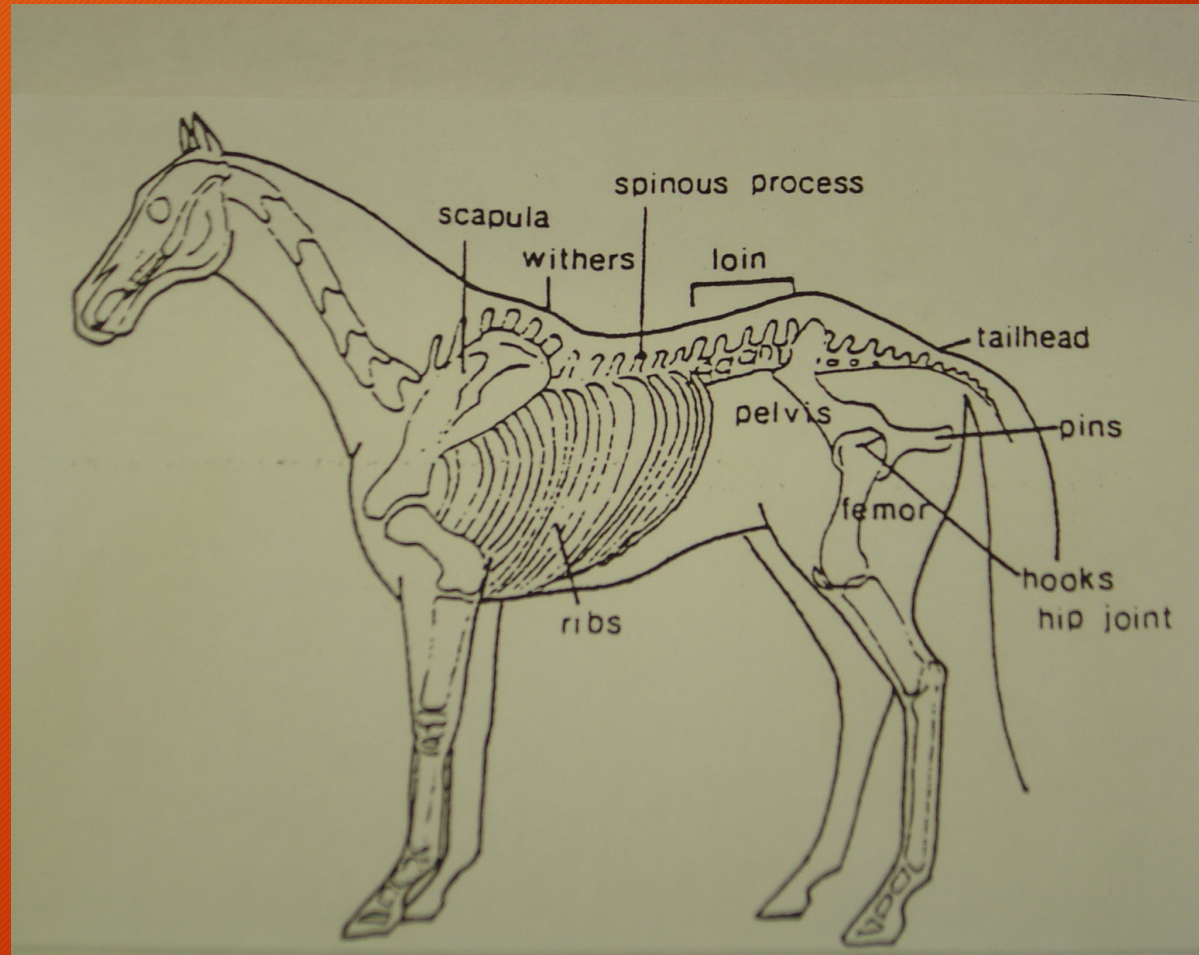
- Horses lose weight from the top down and puts weight on in reverse:
- Bone Marrow
- Internal Organs
- Subcutaneous

Method Of Scoring

- Visual -- can only give a point range
- Palpation -- most accurately reflects score
- Point range --1 through 9
- Don't be afraid to use 1/2 points
- Score individual points - more important than total

6 Equine Parts Of The Body

- Neck
- Withers
- Loin
- Tailhead
- Ribs
- Shoulder



Weight gain/loss is only telling part of the story



- Personality
- Energetic
- Improved/worsening behavior
- Eyes alert
- Body language
- Hair coat
- Improved/worsening body condition

Nutrition and Water

- The average horse will intake 5 to 10 gallons of fresh **water** per day per 1,000 lbs.
- Just like humans, different horses crave or need different **water** intake amounts.
- A horse deprived of feed, but supplied drinking **water**, can survive 20 to 25 days. A horse deprived of **water** may only live up to 3 or 6 days

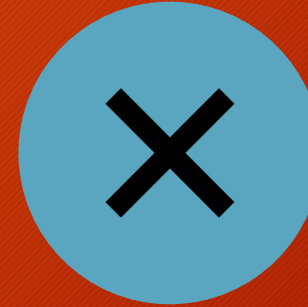
Horses feed



1%- 2% PER 100
LBS. BODY
WEIGHT PER DAY



FOR A 1000 LB.
HORSE, 15 LB.
OF HAY A DAY



NO DUST OR
MOLD

Colic

- The number one killer of horses is colic.
- Colic is not a disease, but rather a combination of signs that alert us to abdominal pain in the horse.
- Colic can range from mild to severe, but it should never be ignored.

Grass Hay

- Less likely to colic on grass hay than alfalfa.
- Can be free fed
- Higher in sugar
- Lower in calories
- Horses stay warm with body fat and fermentation in their belly

Alfalfa Hay




- Higher in protein
- Higher in calories
- Excess ammonia
- Not for free feeding

When To Feed Grains

If you are not meeting their energy needs with hay



If they don't have the energy to perform their jobs



Starved horses need forage not grains to start

Concentrates

Grain should be no more than 20% of the diet

Fat should be no more than 20% of the diet or 30% of the grain mix

Be sure the mineral balance is right

MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS

- Most forages are deficient in micronutrients
- Most grains require 5 lbs. to achieve appropriate dose
- Important for metabolism, bone and tendon growth

Dental Care

- Needed because of the unique anatomy of the horse
- Floating = filing the sharp edges off molars
- Aging is usually done by examining the incisors which erupt dependent on age

Dash- It's ok that he is skinny, he's an old horse



Chronic Weight Loss

- Chronic poor doers often trigger humane investigations
- They aren't all starvation cases
- They aren't all cruelty cases
- Often these are complex medical cases that you need vet guidance on

Chronic Weight Loss

- Underlying Medical Issues
- Dental Issues: Not just in old horses
- Peritonitis (strangles, wounds)
- Liver disease (toxic plants)
- Kidney disease
- Heart disease (congenital or acquired)
- Many more...

Chronic Weight Loss

- Herd Management
 - Age group mixing
 - Lack of proper water (supply or contamination)
 - Adequate feeder space
 - Adequate forage
 - Adequate calories
 - Look for adequacy of food - the quality and quantity.

Bad Investigations Lead to Bad Cases

- Emotional vs. Objective
- Care can be objective
- Is this a crime or do I have an issue with the person?
- Lack of investigative reports
- Don't manufacture evidence to benefit the case.
- Don't coerce people to relinquish
- Document why they surrendered: Might be viewed as extortion.
- Use good investigative practices

Building your Case: What to Collect at Scene

- Indisputable provable evidence
- Organize your paperwork.
- You are an artist, paint the picture.
- State only facts in your reports, no opinions.

Building your Case: What to Collect at Scene

- Witness statements documented and recorded.
- Document smells that you can explain to the jury so they can put themselves there.
- Capture things that appeal to people senses. Eyesight, hearing, taste, touch and smell.

Building your Case: What to Collect at Scene

- Veterinarian reports (Veterinarian may be your best resource).
- Keep and maintain health records
- Keep and maintain evidence collection log
- You may need to collect samples from live animals which may include blood, hair, feces, or samples obtained by swabbing lesions.



Building your Case: What to Collect at Scene

- Capture the cruelty with your reports, video and photos.
- Make a hand drawing of facility, number pens, location of supplies etc. so you can identify where the animal was located and the conditions of the environment.



Building your Case: What to Collect at Scene

- Collect fecal samples (help identify parasite load)
- Water samples
- Hay samples
- Necropsy of dead animals
- Develop impound protocols prior to animals getting seized.

What Documents to Collect From Owner

- Collect ownership records of animals.
- Collect veterinarian records
- Collect receipts of items claimed to be purchased.

Record Animal Information

- Body Condition Score
- Age
- Weight
- Height
- Markings
- Color
- Equine type
- Lameness
- Farrier



Health Examination

- Temperature
- Heart rate
- Respiratory rate
- Lungs
- Sand
- Eyes
- Lymph nodes
- Teeth
- Lameness issues
- Establish feeding protocol and medical treatment



Purpose Of Photography

- Visual record for the jury to see. Remember the jury was not there, so use photos and video to tell the story.
- Photographs and videos are useful additions for recording field and clinical signs and conveying conditions at the site.
- A/V are a permanent record

Purpose Of Photography

- Photos to tell the story (pictures are worth a thousand words)
- Photograph (hay, water, living conditions, fencing, carcass, trash, debris, photos all 4 sides, hooves, cuts, scars, anything worth taking a photo of.

Before and After



Purposes Of Photography As It Relates To Investigations

- Photos and videos tell the story for the jury to see.
- Supplements reports
- Supports investigative findings
- Supports witness statements
- Supports testimony in court
- Supports elements of a crime committed

Contact Information

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